



What Have You Done to Save a Life Today?



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Spring Fever

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The days are getting longer and warmer and the urge to throw your leg over the saddle and fire up your motorcycle is almost too much to bear. However, before you bring that bike back to life, there are a few things you must do to get it and yourself ready for the riding season.

First, listen to your MOM — and by that we mean your Motorcycle Owner's Manual. If you put your bike in hibernation the way your mother told you to, just follow its instructions to get your scooter back on the road. You'll have your work cut out for you, though, if you just parked that baby in the corner of your garage or shed.

For those of you that followed their MOM, your prep time will be relatively short. Pull the cover off, fill the gas tank, change the oil and check the tires for correct pressures and signs of dry rot. Remove any plugs you installed to keep the critters out of your exhaust, carburetor and air filter intake, and then connect the battery following your mother's procedures. If you didn't put your battery on a trickle charger, you might have problems getting your bike fired up. But between your mother and T-CLOCS inspection (see the inspection list online at <http://www.msf-usa.org/downloads/t-clocinspectionchecklist.pdf>) your pre-ride inspection should cover everything.

Although your bike might be road ready now, you have to check your personal protective equipment to make sure it still fits and is in serviceable condition. Those extra pounds you put on over the holidays might mean a trip to the bike shop to buy a new jacket or leather chaps.

Now you need to get yourself ready for the road. Your first trip shouldn't be from Fort Riley, Kan., to Daytona Beach, Fla. for Bike Week. Ease back into shape and knock the rust off your riding skills by practicing the drills outlined in the Motorcycle Safety Foundation's "Riding Tips" handbook. You can get a free copy online at http://www.msf-usa.org/downloads/Riding_Tips.pdf. You might need a refresher course if it's been longer than a few months since your last ride, so contact your local safety

office to schedule an experienced rider's course.

And while you're out there enjoying the new riding season, diligently scan the road for any problems, especially cracks or potholes that developed over the winter. Those of you stationed in colder climates know what I'm talking about. It's the pothole that bottoms out your suspension, rattles your eyeteeth and leaves you wondering if you bent your rims.

If your installation has a Motorcycle Mentorship Program, call and join the group. The MMP is a great way to meet people that share the same passion for riding, and you also can enjoy group rides and activities. If your installation doesn't have an MMP, contact your safety office to check on starting one. You can also check out the Army Motorcycle Mentorship Program Web site at <https://crc.army.mil/mmp/index.asp> to help find local riding associations and information on how to be a safer rider.

Whether you're a hard-core or fair-weather rider, machine, mind and body have to be firing on all cylinders to ensure a safe and enjoyable riding season. Warm weather will come and go, so enjoy it while it's here. Live to ride, and ride safe!

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